

UTPA college students, who fasted for 1 week to express their support for the DREAM Act.

I am extremely grateful to Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan, Defense Secretary Robert Gates, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, former Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez, and many chancellors and many university presidents who are underscoring the urgency of passing the DREAM Act.

Our Armed Forces need courageous servicemen and -women to encourage our Nation's military readiness.

I ask everyone to vote in favor of the DREAM Act.

#### DREAM ACT

(Mr. OLIVER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. OLIVER. Mr. Speaker, this coming spring, tens of thousands of young people will graduate from high school, many of them at the very top of their class, only to discover that they have no hope of pursuing their goals because they were brought here illegally.

The DREAM Act will allow these young people the opportunity to pursue a pathway to citizenship while contributing to our country through higher education or military service, young people like Marissa, an honors student from my district.

Marissa was brought here as a young child from Uruguay and grew up considering herself as American as her classmates. Her English is as good as yours and mine. She excelled in school. Her dream was going to college and becoming a physician, but that dream was crushed when her parents sat her down and told her that her family is in the United States illegally.

America deserves to have the best and brightest young people like Marissa studying in our universities and defending our Nation. And these students deserve the chance to earn citizenship in the country that is the only homeland they know. It is the moral thing to do, and it's the fair thing to do.

I urge my colleagues to support the DREAM Act.

#### DREAM ACT

(Mr. GONZALEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker—and of course I hope that we do have a vote on the DREAM Act—but this is really a plea to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to prove a former official and spokesman for the Bush administration wrong.

Michael Gerson wrote yesterday in The Washington Post: "Whatever its legislative fate, the DREAM Act is effective at stripping away pretense. Opponents of this law don't want earned citizenship for any illegal immigrant—even those personally guilty of no

crime, even those who demonstrate their skills and character. The DREAM Act would be a potent incentive for assimilation. But for some, assimilation clearly is not the goal. They have no intention of sharing the honor of citizenship with anyone called illegal—even those who came as children, have grown up as neighbors and would be willing to give their lives in the Nation's cause."

I implore and I request fair consideration and that we prove Michael Gerson wrong. My fear is that he may be very, very accurate in what this vote represents.

#### SENIORS PROTECTION ACT

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today we are going to be voting on H.R. 5987, the Seniors Protection Act.

For the second year in a row, our seniors have not received a cost-of-living increase for Social Security recipients. The Consumer Price Index that is used to calculate the cost-of-living increase does not take into account what our seniors face on a daily basis. We do need to change how the cost-of-living adjustment is calculated and ensure accurately that the rising costs that seniors face are addressed. I hope that we have an opportunity to address that in the next Congress.

Today, however, we do have a vote coming up for that, and I hope everybody will support it. H.R. 5987 will provide a one-time \$250 payment to seniors in place of the annual cost-of-living adjustment. This will help our seniors offset the rising costs that they face.

Many of us, myself included, introduced legislation in 2009; and today I am happy that we have come to a conclusion that we need to do this today.

I know that the President had said that Congress should pass this. I am pleased that we are finally taking up this bill today, and I ask all of my colleagues for their support.

#### DREAM ACT

(Mr. HIMES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, imagine you wake up one morning to discover that the U.S. Government will be sending you under duress to Guatemala or Mexico or the Ukraine. You don't speak the language; you have never visited. These places are as foreign as foreign can be, but you are being deported because of the crime of a parent.

That's inhumane. It's also dumb economics. The CBO tells us that the DREAM Act, if we pass it, will cut the deficit by \$1.4 billion.

It's dumb for our security. Secretary of Defense Gates says that passing the DREAM Act would be to the advantage of military readiness and recruiting.

We can do these things. We can fix these things. We can create a more humane, secure, and economically prosperous Nation by passing the DREAM Act today.

#### HONORING ARMY STAFF SERGEANT WILLIAM D. MCLAURIN

(Mr. PETERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a truly extraordinary young man from my district. Army Staff Sergeant William McLaurin, known as Staff Sergeant Mac to those who serve with him, is a field artilleryman serving in southern Iraq. His unit is assigned to help protect the civilian State Department provincial reconstruction mission that is helping to rebuild Iraq.

Our former colleague, Mike Flanagan, is serving with the State Department in Iraq and informed me of Staff Sergeant Mac's heroism and sacrifice. Staff Sergeant Mac was wounded twice by a sniper. In the first attack, he was hit in the backside but did not flinch from completing his mission. He returned to duty only 3 weeks later without even so much as a limp.

Several weeks later, while patrolling and escorting Mike on an important mission, he was hit again by the same sniper in the chest and shoulder. While his wounds this time are much more serious, I am happy to report that Staff Sergeant Mac is expected to make a full recovery and is already trying to make it back to his unit in Iraq.

Staff Sergeant Mac is a truly extraordinary young man and one we can all be proud of.

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#### THE DREAM ACT

(Ms. LEE of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the more than 800,000 young people looking to make better lives for themselves. I stand with these children and the DREAM Act because it's smart for the future of our country. But it's the right thing to do for these young people.

The DREAM Act does not reward illegality. It provides the opportunity to achieve the American dream for a select group of students who deserve to realize this dream. Shall we further punish these 800,000 young people through deportation or by keeping them in legal limbo, or should we allow these highly motivated youth to attend colleges and become productive members of our society? The answer really should be quite obvious.

I support the DREAM Act because it is in, of course, our national interest, but it reflects the best of our American values and it is long overdue. I urge a "yes" vote.